

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
Logistics Operations School  
Marine Corps Combat Service Support Schools  
PSC Box 20041  
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RLO D404

**STUDENT OUTLINE**

**CONVOY DEFENSE TECHNIQUES**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. Terminal Learning Objective: Given the requirement to execute vehicular movements, commander's guidance, and the references, conduct convoy operations, ensure movement of assets to the specific destination is within the commander's established time schedules. (0402.04.05)

2. Enabling Learning Objectives:

(1) Given the references, commander's guidance, and a requirement to execute vehicular movements, direct the defense of a convoy, per the references. (0402.04.05f)

(2) Given the references, commander's guidance, and a requirement to execute vehicular movements, identify convoy ambush techniques, per the references. (0402.04.05aa)

**OUTLINE**

1. **Immediate Action Drills**

a. Immediate Action Drills. How we react to ambushes will vary with the type of security force strength, organization and composition of the convoy, and the terrain. No two ambushes are alike. The following immediate action drills will prepare troops for ambush attacks with the objective to teach troops how to neutralize an attack and how to regain the initiative through immediate and positive action.

(1) Sniper Fire. Sniper fire can do little harm to a moving convoy, however if a sniper convinces a convoy to stop and deploy, a more dangerous situation can develop. Sniper fire are often used as deceptions to cause a convoy to stop in a larger enemy kill zone, possibly a deliberate ambush.

(a) When receiving sniper fire the following immediate action drills should be performed:

1. Do not stop.
2. Throw smoke to screen enemy observation, if wind conditions permit.
3. Suppress the area in the sniper's general direction.
4. Provide suppressive fires and supporting arms.
5. Be vigilant of potential future confrontations.

(2) Air Attacks. Enemy aircrafts could pose a major treat by strafing convoys along their axis. This provides the pilot with multiple targets on a single pass. The most effective way to reduce the pilot's target is for drivers to drive off the road alternately and immediately, seeking concealment in a herringbone formation. Once in position, aim at aircraft as listed in table 2-1. In order for heavy machine-guns to be effective, they should lead helicopters 50 meters and fixed-wing aircraft by two hundred yards. Some units may have low altitude air defense (LAAD) attached with stingers. LAAD provides an active defense against air attack.

(a) Passive defensive measures include:

1. Selecting routes that take advantage of natural concealment.
2. Driving at night and using the closed column formation to greatly reduce the chance of the convoy's acquisition by aircraft, providing that all precautions taken during daylight operations are applied as well.
3. Using friendly air or a combat air patrol to provide security of varying degrees.

**Table 2-1. Engaging Enemy Aircraft.**

Aircraft	Course	Aim Point
Jet	Crossing	Two football fields in front of nose
Jet	Overhead	Two football fields in front of nose
Jet	Directly at you	Slightly above aircraft nose
Helicopter	Crossing	One-half football field in front of nose
Helicopter	Hovering	Slightly above helicopter body
Helicopter	Directly at you	Slightly above helicopter body

(3) Ambushes. The greatest single treat to a convoy's survival is an enemy ambush. Two categories of ambushes relevant are: unblocked or blocked.

(a) During an unblocked ambush:

1. Vehicles caught in the kill zone continue to move.

2. Vehicles that have not yet entered the kill zone find cover and concealment, stop short, and dismount.

3. Vehicles caught in the kill zone that become disabled conduct a vehicle unloading drill. Then, situation dependent, the dismounted Marines provide suppressive fire on the enemy or assault through enemy positions.

4. The armored escort vehicles find positions to return suppressive fire and support maneuver of security forces.

5. Security forces maneuver and assault based on rehearsals or frag orders. Indirect fire or close air support (CAS) are called in on the fleeing or fighting enemy as appropriate.

(b) During a blocked ambush:

1. Vehicles that have not yet entered the kill zone find cover and concealment, stop short, and dismount.

2. Vehicles blocked and trapped in the kill zone conduct unloading drills and assault or return fire as a base of fire.

3. Armored escort vehicles find positions to return suppressive fire and support the maneuver of security forces.

4. Security forces maneuver and assault from outside the kill zone based on rehearsals or frag orders.

## 2. Tactical Convoy Security

a. Convoy Escort. Scout platoons may perform convoy escort missions either independently or as part of a larger unit's convoy security mission. The convoy escort mission requires the platoon to provide the convoy with close-in protection from direct fire. The platoon can protect 5 to 10 convoy vehicles per escort vehicle. These convoy vehicles may be combat service support vehicles, command and control vehicles or civilian trucks or buses. Because of their firepower and armor protection from direct fire, indirect fire, and mines, mechanized vehicles are better suited to serve as convoy escort vehicles than high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle (HMMWV). Careful evaluation of the threat must be undertaken whenever assigning HMMWV-equipped scout platoons as convoy escort vehicles. The following considerations apply during convoy escort operations.

b. Command and Control. Due to the inherent task organization of this mission command and control during a convoy is very critical. The scout platoon operates under the control of the convoy commander when executing an escort mission. Prior to execution of the mission the platoon commander must ensure to issue an operation order (OPORD) to all vehicle commanders in the convoy. This is vital because the convoy may itself be task-organized from a variety of units and because many of the vehicles may not have tactical radios. The order should follow the standard five-paragraph operation order format, but special emphasis should be placed on the following subjects:

- (1) Order of march.
- (2) Action on contact.
- (3) Chain of command.
- (4) Communications and signals.
- (5) Actions on vehicle breakdown.

(6) Actions at halt.

(7) Route of march (to include a sketch for each vehicle commander).

c. Tactical Disposition. Security during convoy escort missions must be in all directions and throughout the length of the convoy. This requires that the elements of the scout platoon and any combat or CSS attachments be dispersed throughout the convoy formation. Engineer assets should be located toward the front to respond to obstacles; the fire support team (FIST) should be located near the platoon leader. The platoon will normally use the column formation due to its inherent speed and ease of movement as illustrated in figures 3-1 and 3-2.



Figure 3-1. Mechanized Scout Platoon Escorting Convoy.

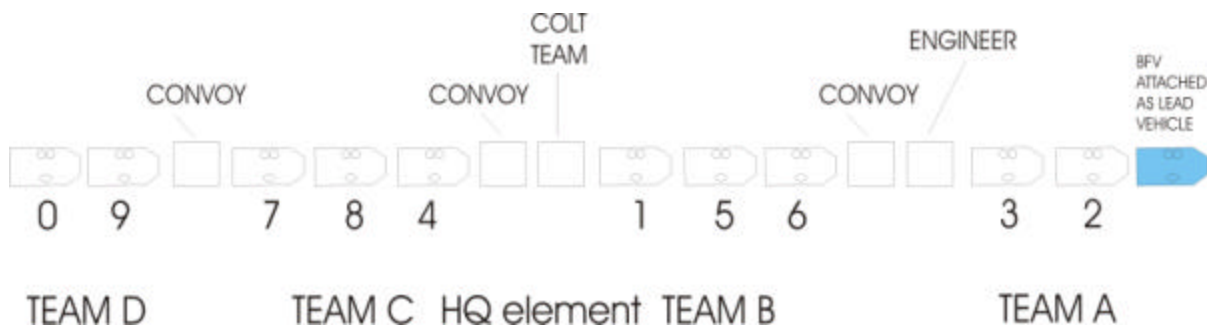


Figure 3-2 HMMWV Scout Platoon Escorting Convoy.

### 3. Vehicle Unloading Battle Drill

a. Vehicle Unloading Battle Drill. The key to surviving an enemy ambush or air attack is the ability of occupants to rapidly exit a vehicle and find cover. If ambushed, a truck may be disabled or unable to escape the kill zone. The occupants need to dismount quickly.

#### b. Unloading Battle Drill Sequence.

(1) As soon as it is determined that the vehicle is unable to escape the kill zone, two sentries on the enemy side of the truck must return a high volume of fire.

(2) Alternately, the two sentries should throw smoke grenades in the direction of the enemy.

(3) Simultaneously, the remaining vehicle occupants dismount the vehicle on the side opposite of the enemy and ensure they are masked from enemy fire.

(4) The A-driver should use the ring mount, if equipped, to lay down suppressive, heavy machine-gun fire.

(5) After covering the vehicle by fire, the two sentries should follow the other Marines over the "masked" side.

(6) Find cover. The vehicle is the target and Marines should find cover elsewhere vice use it as protection.

(7) If the kill zone is well planned by the enemy, cover may not exist, and a rapid and violent assault against the enemy may be required.

(8) If cover is available, it should be used and fire returned. The section then becomes a base of fire for another's section's maneuver. Once the situation has stabilized, the security force can execute its scheme of maneuver.

4. Actions at an Ambush. Ambush is one of the most effective ways to interdict a convoy and is therefore a threat that the convoy escort must be prepared to counter. **Reaction to an ambush must be quick, overwhelming, and decisive.** It must be executed as a drill by all escort and convoy elements, with care taken to avoid fratricide. The following actions should be included in the convoy escort drill:

a. Upon detection of an enemy force, the convoy escort should seek covered positions between the convoy and the enemy and suppress the enemy with the highest possible volume of fire (see figure 3-3). Contact reports are provided to higher headquarters.

b. The convoy commander retains control of the convoy vehicles and continues to move them on the route at the highest possible

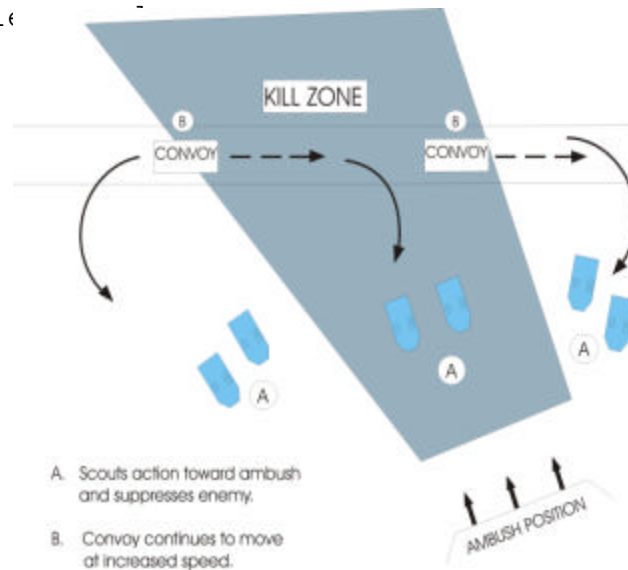


Figure 3-3. Convoy Escort Actions Toward Ambush.

c. Convoy vehicles, if armed, may return fire only until the escort has imposed itself between the convoy and the enemy.

d. Damaged or disabled vehicles are abandoned and pushed off the route (see figure 3-4)

e. The escort leader (scout platoon leader) submits spot reports. If necessary, he requests reinforcement and calls for and directs indirect fires and air support if they are available.

f. The escort, once the convoy is clear of the kill zone, chooses one of the following courses of action based on the composition of the escort and the strength of the enemy force.

g. Continue to suppress the enemy while combat reaction forces move to support (see figure 3-5).

h. Assault the enemy (see figure 3-6)

i. Break contact and move out of the kill zone (see figure 3-7). Generally, mechanized unit-equipped scout platoons will continue to suppress the enemy or execute an assault because of their vehicles' capabilities. HMMWV units are more likely to move out of the kill zone as soon as the convoy is clear. Contact should be broken only with the approval of the scout platoon's higher commander.

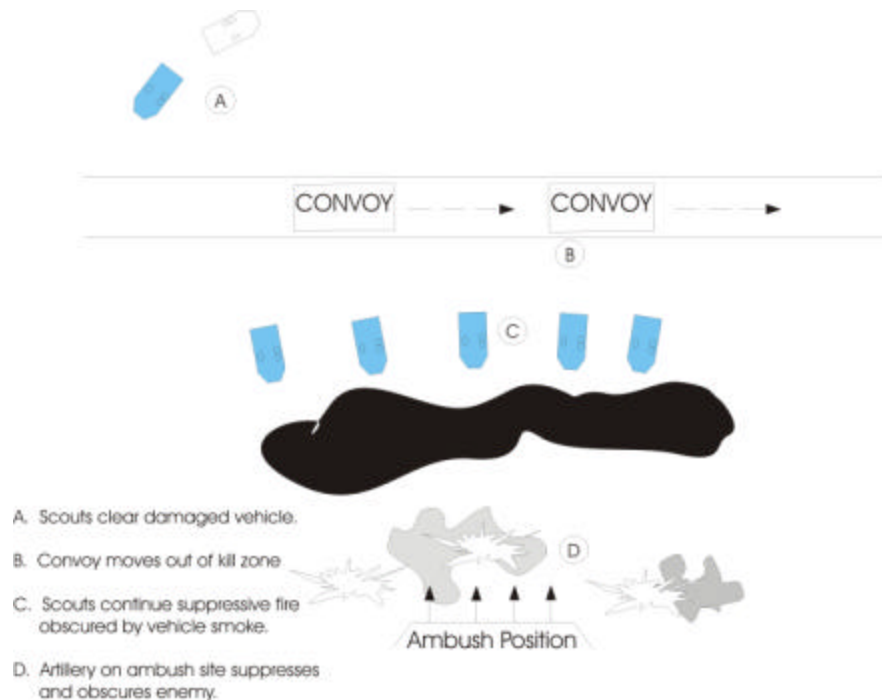


Figure 3-4. Convoy Continues to Move.

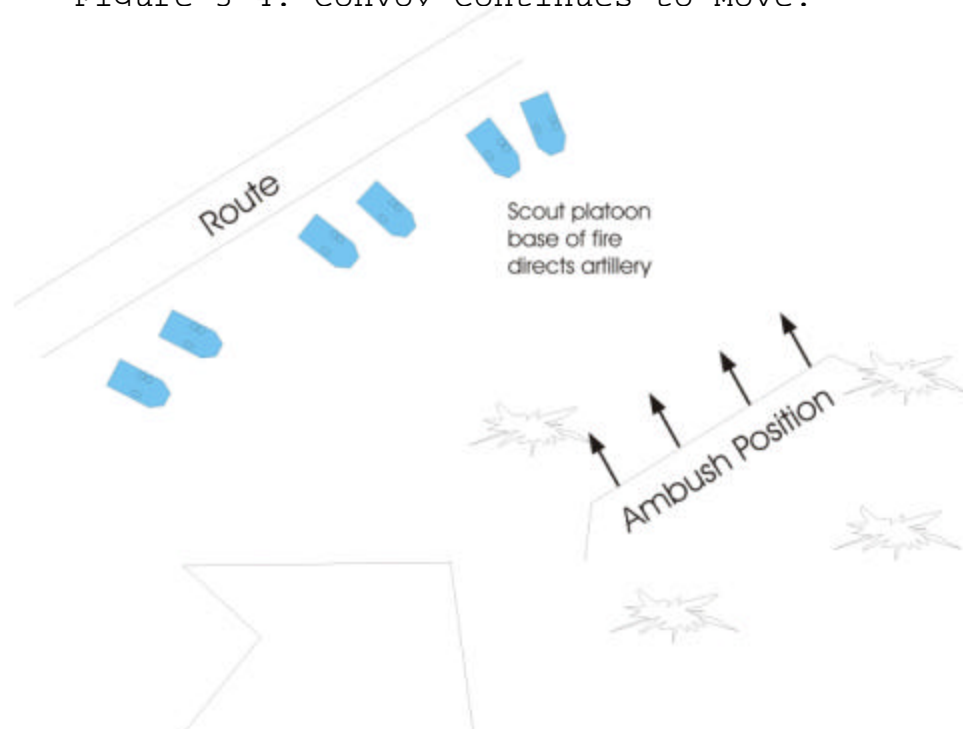




Figure 3-5. Escort Suppresses Ambush for Reaction Force Attack.

**5. Actions during a Short Halt.** During the execution of a convoy, short halts may be required for a number of reasons. During a short halt, the escorting unit is at REDCON 1 regardless of what actions the convoy vehicles are taking. If the halt is for any reason other than an obstacle, the following actions should be taken:

(a) The convoy commander signals the short halt and transmits the order via tactical radio. All vehicles in the convoy assume a herringbone formation.

(b) Escort vehicles assume a herringbone formation, if possible, up to 100 meters beyond the convoy vehicles, which are just clear of the route: Escort vehicles remain at REDCON 1 but establish local security (see figure 3-8)

(c) Convoy vehicles first re-establish the column formation, leaving space for the escort vehicles, when the order is given to move-out (see figure 3-9). Once the convoy is in column the escort vehicles join the column, leaving local security dismounted (see figure 3-10).

(d) Local security personnel mount when all elements are in column, and the convoy continues to move.

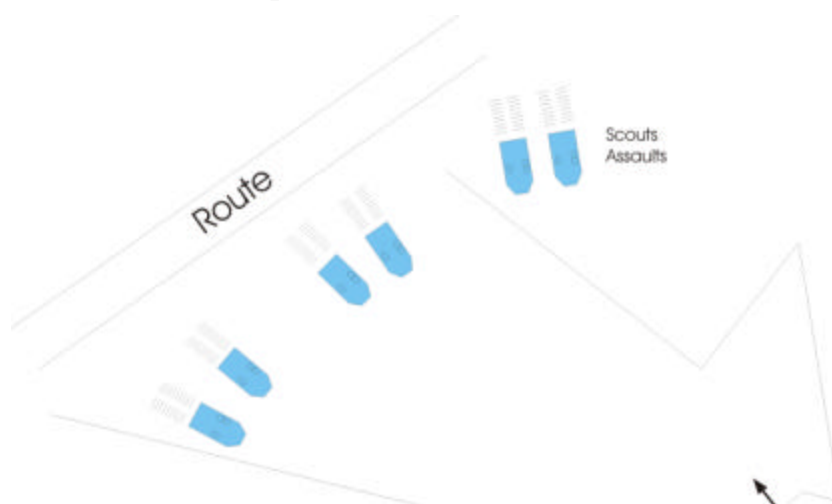


Figure 3-6. Escort Assaults Ambush.

**6. Action at an Obstacle.** Obstacles are a major threat to convoys. The purpose of the route reconnaissance ahead of the convoy is to identify obstacles and either breach them or find bypasses. In some cases, it is not possible to mount a route reconnaissance ahead of the convoy; in other cases, the enemy or its obstacles may avoid detection by the reconnaissance element. In either situation, the convoy must take actions to reduce or bypass the obstacle. The following actions should be taken when the convoy escort encounters a point-type ambush:

(a) The lead security element identifies the obstacle and directs the convoy to make a short halt and establish security. The convoy establishes over watch of the obstacle (see figure 3-11).

(b) The convoy commander relays a spot report to higher headquarters and requests support by combat reaction forces, engineer assets (if they are not already part of the convoy, and aerial reconnaissance elements. In addition, artillery units are alerted to be prepared to provide fire support. The steps are designed to reduce the time the convoy is halted and thus to reduce its vulnerability. The convoy commander must assume that the obstacle is over watched and covered by the enemy.

(c) Simultaneously, an additional reconnaissance team is made up of escort elements and/or engineers moves forward to conduct an obstacle reconnaissance. Because of limited time and assets, farside security need not to be established prior to reconnaissance of the obstacle (see figure 3-12).

(d) The escort forces form a reconnaissance team and begin reconnaissance for a bypass while maintaining 360-degree security of the convoy (see figure 3-12).

(e) Once all reconnaissance is completed, the convoy commander determines which of the following courses of action he will take:

1. Bypass the obstacle.
2. Breach the obstacle with the assets on hand.
3. Breach the obstacle with reinforcing assets.

(f) The convoy commander executes the best course of action and continues the mission.

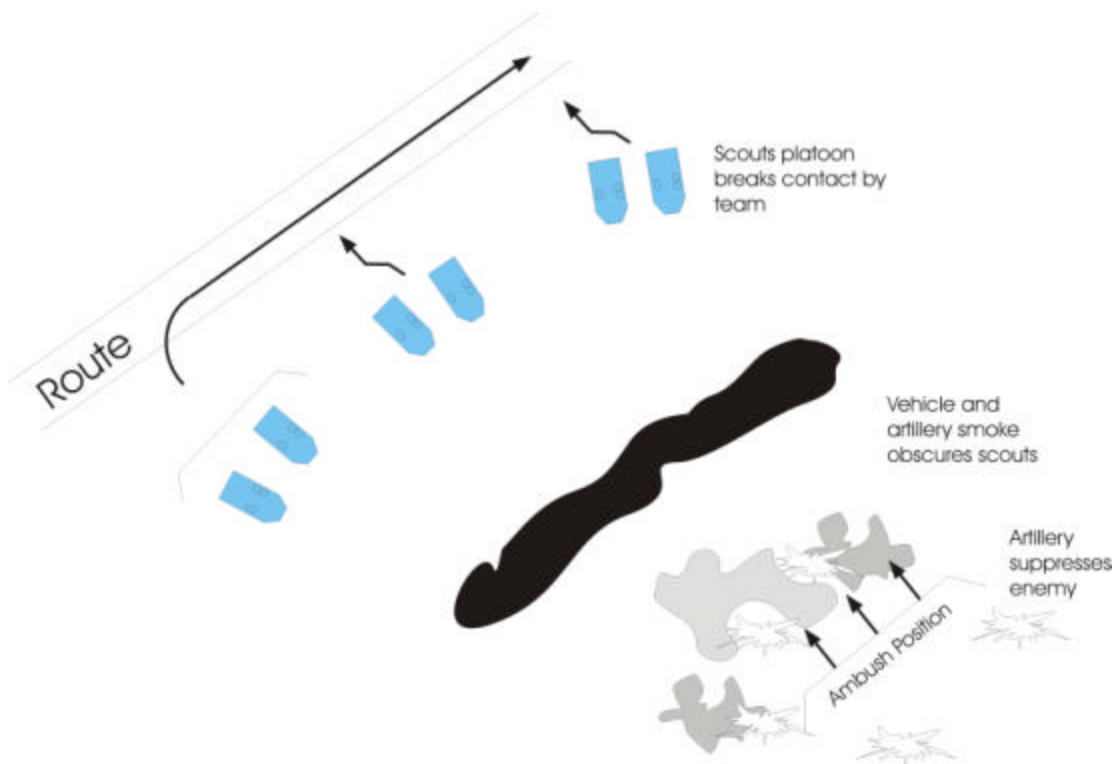


Figure 3-7. Escort Breaks Contact.



Figure 3-8. Convoy Assumes Herringbone Formation.

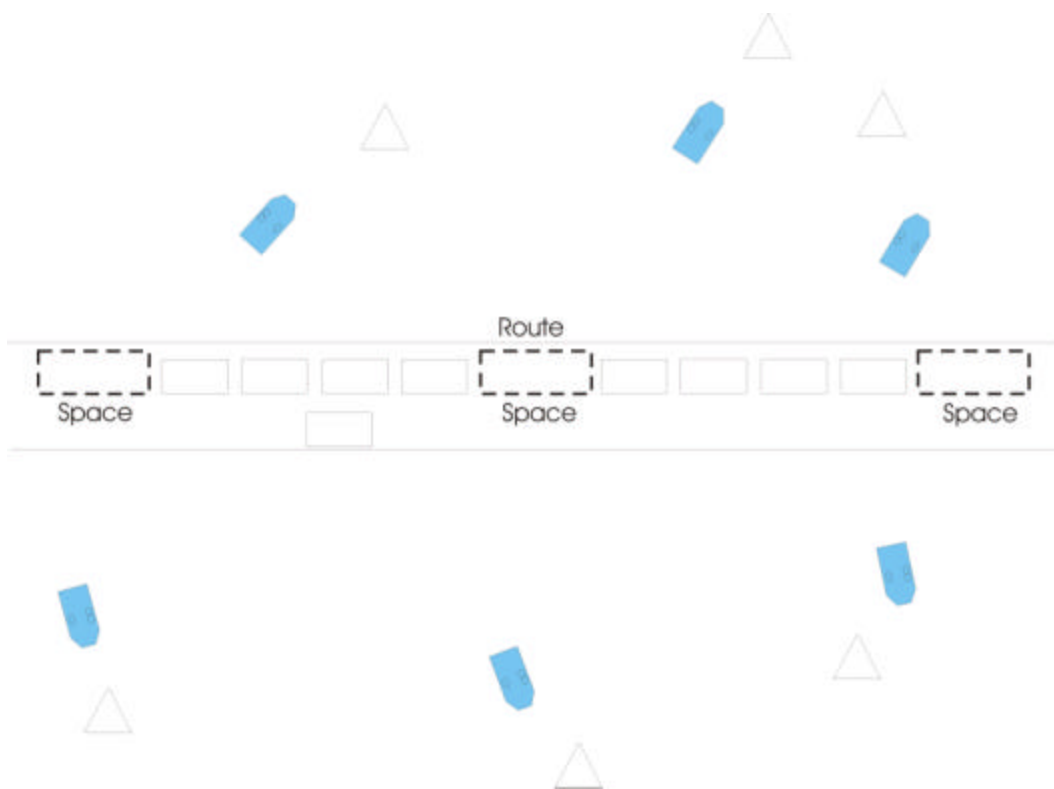


Figure 3-9. Convoy Moves Back into Column Formation.



Figure 3-10. Escort Vehicles Rejoin Columns.

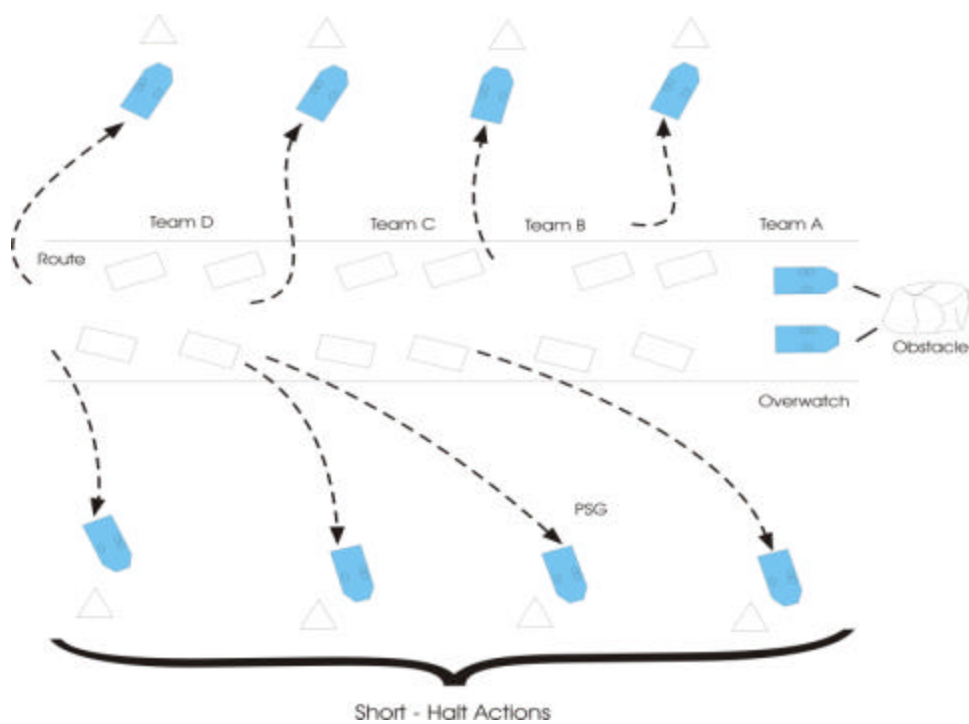


Figure 3-11. Overwatch of an Obstacle.

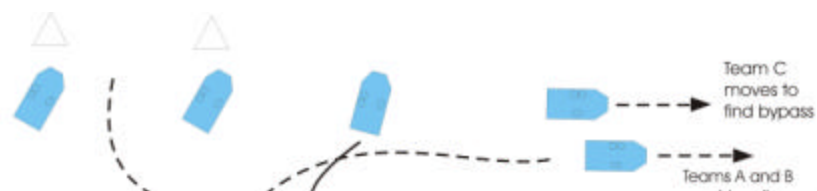


Figure 3-12. Developing the Situation at an Obstacle.

#### **REFERENCES**

1. MCRP 4-11.3F, Convoy Operations Handbook
2. FMFM 4-9, Motor Transport, U.S. Marine Corps
3. TM 11240-14/2, Logistics Considerations for Motor Transport Convoy Operations in a Guerrilla Environment.